



SUBMISSION TO THE

NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

FOR

Information:

Decision: X

Issue: Baffin Island Caribou Management Plan

Background:

- The first island-wide survey of Baffin Island caribou occurred in March 2014, and the results indicated there were very few caribou on Baffin Island. The population was estimated to be 4,652 caribou (3,462–6,250 with a 95% Confidence Interval).
- On January 1, 2015, the Minister of Environment implemented a moratorium on the harvesting of Baffin Island Caribou. The moratorium lasted for just over seven months.
- In August 2015, the Minister of Environment accepted the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's (NWMB's) decision to implement a total allowable harvest (TAH) of 250 male caribou, thereby ending an 8-month harvest moratorium that started in January 2015. It was also determined that unused tags from one harvest season are not to be carried over to the next hunting season.
- The Baffin Island Caribou Management Plan was initially developed in December 2014 in collaboration with ten affected Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTOs), the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board (QWB), Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI), and Parks Canada.
- Consultations on the draft Management Plan occurred March 16 – April 7, 2015 and included discussions on caribou collaring under the research and monitoring component of the Plan.
- The Baffin Island Caribou Management Plan was submitted to the NWMB for decision in March 2016. The Board requested the Department of Environment (DOE) conduct additional consultations due to edits made to the plan after initial consultations.
- The position of Regional Biologist for Baffin region became vacant before the draft management plan could be finalized. The new Regional Biologist started in January 2018, and he was tasked with finalizing the consultation process and plan for submission to the NWMB.

Current Status:

- The revised version of the Management Plan includes results from composition surveys completed from 2015-2018. The composition surveys were used to assess calf recruitment

and approximate sex ratios. The revised version also identifies the limitations of identifying population trends based on composition survey results.

- Earlier versions of the draft Management Plan incorporated 5 harvest management units and recommended harvest management actions for Baffin Island based on population phases. These have been removed from the current version of the plan.
- The implementation schedule for monitoring activities was also revised in the current version to address the updated submission date.

Consultation:

- Consultations on the draft Management Plan occurred March 16–April 7, 2015 and included discussions on caribou collaring under the research and monitoring component of the Plan. While there was caribou collaring support from several of the communities initially, that support appeared to later collapse given opposition from two communities in particular, late in the consultation process.
- The current Baffin Regional Biologist initiated consultation with all Baffin HTOs, which harvest Baffin Island Caribou, in the fall of 2018, following updates to the Management Plan, to incorporate current knowledge and management priorities.
- During the planning for fall consultations, which were proposed for September 24–October 5, 2018, the DOE received a letter from QWB requesting postponement until January. The DOE agreed to postpone the consultations to facilitate participation from co-management partners.
- The Draft Baffin Island Management Plan was provided to the QWB, NTI, NWMB and ten HTOs on September 25, 2018. At that time, the Baffin Regional Biologist requested that the co-management partners provide comments on the Management Plan prior to the January consultations. An additional reminder email was distributed on November 26, 2018 requesting comments prior to the meetings.
- The Baffin Regional Biologist visited all Baffin communities, which harvest from the Baffin Island caribou herd, from January 7 – 18, 2019, to discuss composition survey results from 2015-2018, the Baffin Island Caribou Management Plan, sex-selective harvest options, future research needs, and proposed satellite collaring.
- Consultations were held with HTO representatives from Kimmirut, Qikiqtarjuaq, Pangnirtung, Iqaluit, Cape Dorset, Hall Beach, Igloolik, Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet. Unfortunately, during this consultation tour, weather prevented the charter from getting to Clyde River. Consultations were subsequently completed with the Clyde River HTO on May 27, 2019.
- No comments on the draft management plan were received prior to or during consultations and as a result, the DOE asked for comments to be provided by April 15, 2019.
- The DOE received a second letter from the QWB requesting that the comment period be extended. The DOE agreed to accept comments until June 30, 2019. On June 27, 2019, the GN received an additional request from QWB that the comment period be further extended by a week. No comments were received from the QWB on the Baffin Island Caribou

Management Plan during the consultation period of 25 September through 30 June 2019, neither up to 15 July 2019.

- A consultation summary report was provided to the NWMB for the RM001-2019 in March of 2019.
- An updated consultation summary, including Clyde River, is included with this submission for consideration in September 2019.

Recommendations:

1. The GN requests that the NWMB approve the revised Baffin Island Caribou Co-Management Plan